

MICHAEL A. ZILIS

CURRICULUM VITAE, v. OCTOBER 2025

CONTACT

1651 Patterson Office Tower
120 Patterson Drive
Lexington, KY 40506
(859) 257-7030

✉ michael.zilis@uky.edu
🌐 [Personal Site](#)
🌐 [University Site](#)
🌐 [LinkedIn](#)

PROFESSIONAL

ACADEMIC

University of Kentucky

Professor, Department of Political Science, 2025-present
Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, 2020-2025
Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, 2015-2020

DePaul University

Instructor, Department of Political Science, 2014-2015

ADMINISTRATIVE

University of Kentucky

Chair, Department of Political Science, 2025-present
Founder, Law and Justice Major & Minor, 2024-present
Executive Committee, Department of Political Science, 2020-present
Director of Graduate Studies, Department of Political Science, 2021-2025
Graduate Council, University Senate, 2023-2024

EDUCATION

University of Michigan

Ph.D. Political Science, 2013
* Fields: American Politics, Methods, Psychology
* Recognition: APSA Edward S. Corwin Award nominee

Miami University

Bachelor of Arts, 2007
* Fields: Political Science, History, Mathematics
* Honors: *summa cum laude*, University Honors with Distinction, Major Honors

RESEARCH

BOOKS

Wedeking, Justin, and **Michael A. Zilis**. *Compliance and the Rule of Law in America: How the Emergence of the New Media Landscape and Framing Shapes Attitudes Towards the Supreme Court*. Cambridge University Press, Elements in Experimental Political Science Series. Under contract, completion fall 2025.

Zilis, Michael A. 2021. *The Rights Paradox: How Group Attitudes Shape U.S. Supreme Court Legitimacy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

* Reviews: *Perspectives on Politics*, *Political Science Quarterly*

Zilis, Michael A. 2015. *The Limits of Legitimacy: Dissenting Opinions, Media Coverage, and Public Responses to Supreme Court Decisions*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

* Recognition: 2015 Exemplary Law Book, selected by Lee Epstein for the *Green Bag Almanac & Reader*

* Reviews: *Perspectives on Politics*, *Political Science Quarterly*, *Political Studies Review*, *Journal of Supreme Court History*

ARTICLES

Wedeking, Justin, and **Michael A. Zilis**. Forthcoming. "Supreme Court Legitimacy in a New Media Era: Judicial Legitimacy, Polarization, and the Changing Media Landscape." *Political Research Quarterly*.

Wedeking, Justin, and **Michael A. Zilis**. Conditionally accepted. "Democratic Institutions Under Threat: Corrosive Issue Frames, Internet News, and the U.S. Supreme Court." *Political Communication*.

Masood, Ali, Ryan Strickler, and **Michael A. Zilis**. 2024. "The Rule of Law in Red and Blue: Affective Polarization and Support for Legal Institutions in the United States." *American Politics Research* 52(4): 403-413.

Ono, Yoshikuni, and **Michael A. Zilis**. 2023. "Do Americans Perceive Diverse Judges as Inherently Biased?" *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 11(2): 335-344.

Ono, Yoshikuni, and **Michael A. Zilis**. 2022. "Ascriptive Traits and Perceptions of Impropriety in the Rule of Law: Race, Gender, and Public Assessments of Whether Judges Can Be Impartial." *American Journal of Political Science* 66(1): 43-58.

* Coverage: The Journalist's Resource

Zilis, Michael A. 2022. "How Identity Politics Polarizes Rule of Law Opinions." *Political Behavior* 44: 179-199.

Douglas, Joshua A., and **Michael A. Zilis**. 2021. "Bring the Masks and Sanitizer: The Surprising Bipartisan Consensus about Safety Measures for In-Person Voting during the Coronavirus Pandemic." *Georgia Law Review* 55: 1585-1620.

* Coverage: Politico

Zilis, Michael A., and Rachael Blandau. 2021. "Judicial Legitimacy, Political Polarization, and How the Public Views the Supreme Court." *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*.

Zilis, Michael A., and Xander Borne. 2021. "Defying the Supreme Court: The Impact of Overt Resistance to Landmark Legal Rulings." *Social Science Quarterly* 102(2): 920-938.

Zilis, Michael A. 2021. "Cognitive Heuristics, Inter-Institutional Politics, and Public Perceptions of Insulated Institutions: The Case of the U.S. Supreme Court." *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 33(1): 76-98.

Zilis, Michael A., and Justin Wedeking. 2020. "The Sources and Consequences of Political Rhetoric: Issue Importance, Collegial Bargaining, and Disagreeable Rhetoric in Supreme Court Opinions." *Journal of Law and Courts* 8(2): 203-227.

Denison, Alexander, Justin Wedeking, and **Michael A. Zilis**. 2020. "Negative Media Coverage of the Supreme Court: The Interactive Role of Opinion Language, Coalition Size, and Ideological Signals." *Social Science Quarterly* 101(1): 121-143.

Mark, Alyx, and **Michael A. Zilis**. 2019. "The Conditional Effectiveness of Legislative Threats: How Court Curbing Alters the Behavior of (Some) Supreme Court Justices." *Political Research Quarterly* 72(3): 570-583.

* Coverage: *Pacific Standard Magazine*, London School of Economics and Political Science Blog

Zilis, Michael A. 2018. "Minority Groups and Judicial Legitimacy: Group Affect and the Incentives for Judicial Responsiveness." *Political Research Quarterly* 71(2): 270-283.

* Coverage: London School of Economics and Political Science Blog

Mark, Alyx, and **Michael A. Zilis**. 2018. "Restraining the Court: Assessing Accounts of Congressional Attempts to Limit Supreme Court Authority." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 43(1): 141-169.

Wedeking, Justin, and **Michael A. Zilis**. 2018. "Disagreeable Rhetoric and the Prospect of Public Opposition: Opinion Moderation on the U.S. Supreme Court." *Political Research Quarterly* 71(2): 380-394.

Mark, Alyx, and **Michael A. Zilis**. 2018. "Blurring Institutional Boundaries: Judges' Perceptions of Threats to Judicial Independence." *Journal of Law and Courts* 6(2): 333-353.

Zilis, Michael A. 2018. "The Political Consequences of Supreme Court Consensus: Media Coverage, Public Opinion, and Unanimity as a Public-Facing Strategy." *Washington University Journal of Law & Policy* 54: 229-243.

Zilis, Michael A., Justin Wedeking, and Alexander Denison. 2017. "Hitting the 'Bullseye' in Supreme Court Coverage: News Quality in the Court's 2014 Term." *Elon Law Review* 9(2): 489-523.

Maltzman, Forrest, Alyx Mark, Charles R. Shipan, and **Michael A. Zilis**. 2014. "Stepping on Congress: Courts, Congress, and Inter-Institutional Politics." *Journal of Law and Courts* 2(2): 219-240.

REVIEWS

Zilis, Michael A. 2025. Book Review of Dave Bridge, *Pushback: The Political Fallout of Supreme Court Decisions* (University of Missouri Press). *Journal of Church and State* 67(2): 1-2.

Zilis, Michael A. 2021. Book Review of Brandon L. Bartels and Christopher D. Johnston, *Curbing the Court: How the Public Constrains Judicial Independence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press). *Public Opinion Quarterly* 85(2): 719-722.

Zilis, Michael A. 2018. Book Review of Louis Fisher, *Supreme Court Expansion of Presidential Power: Unconstitutional Leanings* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas). *Law and Politics Book Review* 28(4): 42-44.

Zilis, Michael A. 2016. Book Review of Richard Davis, *Covering the United States Supreme Court in the Digital Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press). *Perspectives on Politics* 14(3): 882-883.

WORKING PAPERS

"The TikTok Addiction: TikTok and the Future of the Supreme Court." With Justin Wedeking.

"The Double Bind: Ascriptive Heuristics, Partisan Polarization, and Public Opposition to Non-White Prosecutors." With Yoshikuni Ono

"Before the Merits: Examining Pro-Active Judicial Signaling Methods in the Separation of Powers Game." With Alyx Mark, Nicole Motherway, and Izzy Bailey.

ONGOING PROJECTS

"Courts in the Crosshairs: Understanding the Rise in and Ramifications of Threats and Violence Directed at the U.S. Judiciary." With Justin Wedeking. Under review at the National Science Foundation, Law and Science. Proposed: \$297,911

"Judges Behaving Badly: Judicial Misbehavior and Discipline in the U.S." With Justin Wedeking. Data collection stage.

“Portrayals and Perceptions of the Supreme Court in a New Media Landscape.” National Science Foundation Grant #1849286 with Justin Wedeking. Award: \$275,000 for 2019-2023

“The Impact of COVID-19 on the 2020 Elections in Kentucky and Beyond,” UK CURE COVID-19 Pilot Program, subproject to National Institute of Health Grant #UL1TR001998, with Joshua A. Douglas. Award \$9600 for 2020

“2019 Collaborative Kentucky Exit Poll.” With Benjamin Knoll, Michele Margolis, Dan Hopkins, Jaclyn Johnson, Ryan Lloyd, Michael Hail, Josiah Marineau, Shawn Williams, Andrew Lewis, Jack Mewhirter, and David Azizi.

* Selected coverage: FiveThirtyEight, Seattle Post-Intelligencer, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, San Antonio Express, Arizona Republic, SFGate, Yahoo News UK, Yahoo News France, WTHR-Indianapolis, FOX 13-Tampa Bay, Albany Times Union, Daily Herald-Illinois, Oklahoman

INVITED TALKS, “Author Meets Critics” Panelist, *Constitutional Powers and Politics* by Eileen Braman, MPSA, 2024
WORKSHOPS & “Author Meets Critics” Panelist, *Black and Blue* by James Gibson and Michael Nelson, MPSA, 2019
ROUNDTABLES *Law and Courts Workshop*, St. Louis University, October 12-13, 2018
Speaker Series, University of Mannheim, September 10, 2018
The Future of the Supreme Court, Miami University, September 22, 2016
Judgment-Rationale Inconsistency in the Supreme Court, Ohio State University, April 23, 2016
ATHGO International Symposium, World Bank, July 5-7, 2006

CONFERENCE Midwest Political Science Association National Conference, 2011-2025
American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, 2012, 2014, 2016-2019, 2021
Kentucky Political Science Association, 2018-2019, 2022
Law and Society Association Annual Meeting, 2016, 2018
Conference on Empirical Legal Studies, 2015, 2018
Research Design for Causal Inference, Northwestern University 2017
Southern Political Science Association Annual Meeting, 2016-2017
Annual Meeting of the International Society of Political Psychology, 2012
Northeastern Political Science Association Annual Meeting, 2006, 2011
New York State Political Science Association Annual Conference, 2006
International Young Researchers Conference, 2006

INTERNAL “Courts in the Crosshairs: Understanding the Rise in and Ramifications of Threats and Violence
TALKS Directed at the U.S. Judiciary.” With Justin Wedeking. Rosenberg College of Law, Faculty
Research Seminar, University of Kentucky, November 6, 2024
“Panel with Professors,” October 19, 2022
“Building a Better Society: Coping with COVID,” September 28, 2021
“Election 2020 – Is American Democracy at Risk?” October 22, 2020
“The Impact of the Pandemic and Protests on 2020 Elections,” June 11, 2020

“Constitutional Controversy in the Age of President Trump,” September 18, 2017
2016 Presidential Election Forum Panelist, October 20, 2016

GRANTS & AWARDS

“Courts in the Crosshairs: Understanding the Rise in and Ramifications of Threats and Violence Directed at the U.S. Judiciary.” With Justin Wedeking. Under review at the National Science Foundation, Law and Science. Proposed: \$297,911
Andrew Carnegie Fellows Program, 2024-2025 cycle, Junior Fellow nominee of the University of Kentucky
“Portrayals and Perceptions of the Supreme Court in a New Media Landscape,” National Science Foundation Grant #1849286, with Justin Wedeking. Award: \$275,000 for 2019-2023
“Framing, Debate, and Opinion Change in the Social Media Age,” Research and Creative Activities Program, University of Kentucky, with Justin Wedeking. Award: \$3000 for 2021-2022
“Computational Account of Framing in Arguments,” National Science Foundation, with Justin Wedeking, Brent Harrison, Arnav Jhala, and Justus Robertson. Declined for 2021
“The Impact of COVID-19 on the 2020 Elections in Kentucky and Beyond,” UK CURE COVID-19 Pilot Program, subproject to National Institute of Health Grant #UL1TR001998, with Joshua A. Douglas. Award: \$9600 for 2020
German Internet Panel (GIP), seven item allotment regarding judicial legitimacy, 2017
The Limits of Legitimacy, 2015 Exemplary Law Book, *Green Bag Almanac & Reader*
Southern Political Science Association Artinian Award, \$500 travel award, 2016
APSA Edward S. Corwin Award (nominated), Best Dissertation in Public Law, 2014
Rackham Dissertation Fellowship, University of Michigan, 2013
Gerald R. Ford Fellowship, \$3500 research grant, University of Michigan, 2011-2013
Rackham Predoctoral Fellowship Program (nominated), University of Michigan, 2012
University of Michigan Thesis Grant, 2011
University of Michigan Fellowship, Department of Political Science, 2010-2011
IDEAS / IGERT Fellowship, Center for the Study of Complex Systems, University of Michigan, 2007-2008

TEACHING

RECOGNITION

Outstanding Teacher, College of Arts & Sciences, University of Kentucky, 2019
Outstanding Teacher (finalist), University of Kentucky, 2019
Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship for Excellence in Teaching (nominated), 2018

COURSES

Judicial Politics (undergraduate, graduate), American Political Institutions (graduate), American Political Behavior (graduate), Constitutional Law, First Amendment Rights, Rights and Equality, Politics of Law and Courts, Law and the Political System, Public Opinion, Criminal Courts and Process in the U.S., The American Presidency, Introduction to American Government, Research Internship, Honors Capstone

TRAINING &

Center for the Enhancement of Learning & Teaching Workshop, University of Kentucky, 2016

EXPERIENCE	MyGuru, Senior Tutor, 2010-2015 Walter Gross Jr. Family Student-Athlete Development Center, Miami University, 2006-2007 Bernard B. Rinella, Jr. Learning Center, Miami University, 2005-2007
PEDAGOGICAL WRITING	Skoskiewicz, Mark, Lucas Fink, and Michael A. Zilis . 2015. <i>Plan, Prepare and Perform: A Strategic Approach to Test Prep</i> . E-book

SERVICE

RECOGNITION	Excellent Undergraduate Research Mentor, nominee 2024, 2025
PHD ADVISING	Audrey Baricovich (chair), Rachael Blandau (chair), Alex Farone (chair) N=10 PhD and MA committees as of 2025
HONORS THESIS	N=10 undergraduates as of 2025
RESEARCH LAB	N=35 undergraduates as of 2025
DEPARTMENT	Chair, 2025-present Executive Committee, 2020- Community Engagement Committee, 2025-present Director of Graduate Studies, 2021-2025 Junior Faculty Mentor, 2022-present Graduate Program Committee, 2018-2025 Faculty Search Committee, 2017, 2022 (chair), 2024, 2025 Department Manager Search Committee, 2024 Faculty Merit and Review Committee, 2020, 2024 Director of Public Relations, 2019-2020 Political Science Colloquium Coordinator, 2017-2020 Faculty Publications Wall, 2017-2019 Vandenbosch Outstanding Legal Studies Paper Award Committee, 2017-2019 Undergraduate Program Committee, 2015-2017
COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY	Founder, Law and Justice Major & Minor, Establishment 2022-2024, Program 2024-present College Distribution of Effort (DOE) Committee, 2024-2025 Graduate Council, 2023-2024 Trunzo Scholarship Committee, 2024 College Strategic Planning: Building Trust, Transparency, and Accountability, 2022-2023 Evaluation Committee for Tenure and Promotion, Martin School of Public Policy, 2023 External Writer for Tenure and Promotion, Gender and Women's Studies, 2023 Advisor, UK Moot Court, 2019-2022 Advisor, UK Constitution Club, 2019-2022

“Building a Better Society: Coping with COVID,” Panelist, 2021
 College Teaching Awards Committee, 2020
 “Election 2020 – Is American Democracy at Risk?” Panelist, 2020
 “The Impact of the Pandemic and Protests on 2020 Elections” Panelist, 2020
 “2016 Presidential Election Forum: Panelist, 2016
 Outside Dissertation Examiner for Anthropology, English, History, and Public Policy
 Faculty Mentoring Program, College of Arts & Sciences, 2015 -2016
 Internal Reviewer for Tenure and Promotion (2x)

DISCIPLINE	“Author Meets Critics” Panelist, <i>Constitutional Powers and Politics</i> by Eileen Braman, MPSA, 2024 Editorial Board, <i>Communication and Democracy</i> , 2023-present Editorial Board and stand-in Associate Editor, <i>Journal of Law and Courts</i> , 2019-2020 APSA Long Term Mentoring Program, 2018-2020 “Author Meets Critics” Panelist, <i>Black and Blue</i> by James Gibson and Michael Nelson, MPSA, 2019 APSA Law and Courts Teaching and Mentoring Award Committee, 2017-2018 APSA Law and Courts Service Award Committee, 2016-2017 External Reviewer for Tenure and Promotion (3x)
MEDIA (SELECTED)	<i>USA Today</i> , <i>Washington Times</i> , ABC News 36 Lexington, LEX 18 NBC Lexington; WKYT CBS Lexington; Gray TV Washington D.C., UK Student News Network, UK Now
DISCUSSANT & CHAIR	Midwest Political Science Association National Conference American Political Science Association Annual Meeting Southern Political Science Association Annual Meeting Law and Society Association Annual Meeting
REVIEWER	<i>American Political Science Review</i> ; <i>American Journal of Political Science</i> ; <i>Journal of Politics</i> ; <i>Political Research Quarterly</i> ; <i>Political Analysis</i> ; <i>Political Science Research and Methods</i> ; <i>Political</i> <i>Behavior</i> ; <i>Politics, Groups, and Identities</i> ; <i>Social Science Quarterly</i> ; <i>Law and Society Review</i> ; <i>Journal of Law and Courts</i> ; <i>Journal of Empirical Legal Studies</i> ; <i>Justice System Journal</i> ; <i>Criminology</i> ; <i>Law & Social Inquiry</i> ; <i>Perspectives on Politics</i> ; <i>PS: Political Science & Politics</i> ; <i>Journal of Legislative</i> <i>Studies</i> ; <i>Congress & the Presidency</i> ; <i>Law & Policy</i> ; <i>Artificial Intelligence Review</i> ; <i>Oxford Research</i> <i>Encyclopedia</i> ; <i>Law and Politics Book Review</i> ; <i>Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion</i> ; <i>Journal of</i> <i>Church and State</i> ; <i>Democratization</i> ; <i>Criminology</i> ; <i>Mobilization</i> ; National Science Foundation; Cambridge University Press; New York University Press; George Mason University Press